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3 **FINAL DRAFT EPP PAPER ON TOURISM STRATEGY**  
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6 *The EPP Group*  
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8 - in response to the Commission's guidance on how to safely resume travel and reboot Europe's  
9 tourism in 2020 and beyond:

10 - emphasises the need for a more concrete and detailed action plan on the monitoring and  
11 evaluation of the proposed **phased exit strategy** from the COVID-19 crisis. Urges that any  
12 measure must be based on **reliable and uniform data** and exchange of it, and commitment of  
13 Member States, bearing in mind agreed, objective and non-discriminatory principles and  
14 criteria towards **unrestricted freedom of movement** and proper **functioning of the single**  
15 **market**;

16 - requests that a **mechanism** is put in place on the EU level for establishing a **threshold for**  
17 **safety and security** for lifting or introducing travel restrictions and that an appropriate level  
18 of monitoring and action plan is prepared for any negative development of the epidemiological  
19 landscape. Requests that an EU level mechanism is created to define the rate of a sufficiently  
20 low level of transmission, and that uniform application of such a rate is ensured across the EU;

21 - highlights that travel restrictions and border controls should be lifted for regions, areas and  
22 Member States with a **positively evolving and sufficiently similar epidemiological**  
23 **situations**, once a **common criteria** is established for that, and that positive evolution of the  
24 epidemiological situation is key for restoring safe travel and transport and resumption of  
25 tourism services;

26 - considers that while the general principles for restoring connectivity, protection of passengers  
27 and transport workers are welcome, as a matter of urgency, standards and detailed protocols  
28 should be established and made internationally accepted, for **common hygiene measures** for  
29 the different transport modes. Each transport operator should apply such uniform measures in  
30 a harmonised way so as to provide predictability and clarity. Technical operational protocols  
31 should be the prerequisite for safe travel;

32 - welcomes the release by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the European  
33 Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) of the COVID-19 Aviation Health Safety  
34 Protocol guidelines for the safe restart of air transport in Europe and urges their swift  
35 implementation;

36 - supports that the highest level of safety and security should be enforced and maintained by  
37 **interoperable digital technologies** (applications to support mobile tracing or a dedicated  
38 Commission website of information, or through the Digital Innovation Hubs) with the intention  
39 of providing help for the travel and tourism industry and the tourists themselves. An early alert  
40 system that warns tourists in a very agile way about any potential health threat in their destiny  
41 should be developed, so that quarantine and evacuation protocols are immediate and effective;

42 - insists that the reactivation of the **tourism sector** must be based on measures that enhance the  
43 **competitiveness** of the sector, and focus on guaranteeing liquidity and preferential financing  
44 terms of companies and self-employed, regardless of their turnover and support the employees

45 of the tourism sector who are now out of job. Therefore, requests the Commission to propose  
46 a roadmap towards achieving a major reduction in administrative burdens affecting SMEs in  
47 the tourism and transport sectors and reiterates its request to the Commission to draft a  
48 comprehensive strategy for the tourism sector, including the cultural sector, supported by a  
49 specific **budget line** in the next MFF;

50 - welcomes the Commission Communication (COM(2020) 3251) on the progressive  
51 resumption of tourism services and for health protocols in hospitality establishments and urges  
52 the Commission to set a **European Sanitary label guaranteeing the highest hygiene and**  
53 **safety** standards in EU tourism facilities to increase trust of tourists and boost the recovery of  
54 the sector;

55 - Since small and **family-run businesses**, in particular **agri-tourism and small hospitality**  
56 **providers**, will face more difficulties in complying with new safety standards compared to  
57 large tourism companies and infrastructures, they must receive particular attention and support.  
58 This situation is particularly prevalent in islands dependent on tourism facing double insularity,  
59 they too must receive tailor-made support to aid their recovery;

60 - welcomes the Commission Recommendation (COM(2020) 3125) on **vouchers** offered to  
61 passengers and travellers as an alternative to reimbursement for cancelled package travel and  
62 transport services in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which provides flexibility and  
63 support for operators - also in form of state aid and guarantee schemes - as well as appropriate  
64 protection for consumers. Consumers' confidence is key; without trust, potential tourists will  
65 not buy any travel and tourism services in advance. Tourists must be sure that, in case of  
66 cancellations due to the pandemic, they will be compensated. Mandatory travel insurances should  
67 be encouraged. Proposes to make vouchers more attractive, through the creation of promissory  
68 notes from vouchers with the aim to provide incentives for their use during the summer 2020.  
69 Those vouchers that have already been issued could provide tourists with extra features, such  
70 as offering discounts, the possibility to redeem them for package tours or the possibility of  
71 changing the identity of the holder. Reiterates its request to the Commission to propose a  
72 stronger legally based solution for the issuance of vouchers;

73 - invites the Commission to launch a **communications campaign**, including through an EU-  
74 wide information app, informing about all the measures taken to guarantee travellers safety in  
75 order to increase citizens' knowledge and confidence about travelling in the EU;

76 - considers that the EU Recovery Plan must include the possibility to provide additional  
77 financial support to the tourism sector, based on the share of Tourism & travel on Member  
78 States GDP and the flexibility for Member States under State aid rules to support the tourism  
79 sector must be maintained till end of 2021. As part of a coordinated response, those countries  
80 that are particularly dependent on the tourism sector should be given a **special treatment**, as  
81 well as specific measures should be considered for outermost regions (RUPs) and insular  
82 regions. Ultra-peripheral regions, where tourism has a great role to play, should also be  
83 properly addressed in the Recovery Plan.

84 - Connectivity is a crucial need for outermost regions, taking account of its structural, social  
85 and economic situation, reflected in Article 349 of the Treaty, which acknowledges the special  
86 need of protecting these regions due to their remoteness, insularity, small size, difficult  
87 topography, climate and economic dependence on a few products. Article 355 also  
88 acknowledges the need of protecting the insular regions that, due to their geographical  
89 circumstances, need special attention in particular the islands facing double insularity. Demand

90 to visit these places already exists; the EU must make sure it is logistically possible for tourists  
91 to get there.

92 - maintains that within the framework of the recovery strategy, Commission must pay special  
93 attention to the importance of **culture** for the European tourism experience, as 68 % of  
94 Europeans say that the presence of cultural heritage has an influence on the choice of their  
95 holiday destination<sup>1</sup>. The EU is a key cultural tourism destination mostly thanks to its  
96 incomparable cultural heritage, which includes museums, theatres, historical site, festivals and  
97 cultural routes. Calls in this respect for an increase in support for the cultural sector to give all  
98 Europeans, and especially young people the possibility to experience other European cultures  
99 and European history, including a budget increase to Discover EU, a programme that can give  
100 an important stimulus to tourism. Draws the attention on the specificities of the cultural  
101 institutions receiving public in the recovery measures to ensure the safety of visitors and at the  
102 same time to sustain their economic model.

103 Underlines the major role of sport for tourism, recalling the important place of sporting events  
104 and activities in making Europe's regions attractive to tourists, and highlighting the  
105 opportunities arising from travel by athletes and spectators to sports events, which can attract  
106 tourists to even the most remote areas. Highlights the importance of Europe's **gastronomy**,  
107 gastronomic routes and **HORECA sector** for the tourist industry and the economy as a whole;  
108 these must therefore be integrated into the overall tourism strategy.

109 - Ask the Commission to design a long-term strategy that goes beyond just reactive measures  
110 to COVID-19 and aims to build the basis for a strong tourism industry in the EU. This strategy  
111 must adapt to the new reality once the pandemic is over but its devastating effects remain. The  
112 long-term strategy must include a plan for digitalization of the sector, regeneration schemes for  
113 touristic spaces and support the green transition of the sector by adapting processes and  
114 renewing infrastructures and facilities.

115 - insists that the a **proper strategy for sustainable tourism** should be adopted in coordination  
116 with the European Parliament and Member States, including measures to be applied and  
117 respected by all Member States, by the industry and tourists;

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<sup>1</sup> Special Eurobarometer 466 - Cultural Heritage, 12/2017